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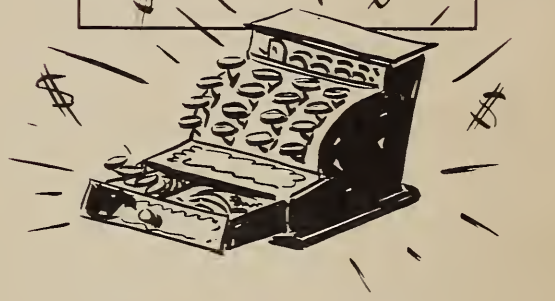
"Consumer Time"

SATURDAYS
11:15 A.M. EST
10:15 A.M. CST
9:15 A.M. MST
8:15 A.M. PST



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THIS IS THE WAY WE WASH OUR CLOTHES

August 2, 1947

1. JOHN: It's the story of easier wash days... today on ...

2. SOUND: CASH REGISTER RINGS...MONEY IN TILL

3. JOHN: CONSUMER TIME!

4. SOUND: CASH REGISTER...CLOSE DRAWER

5. ANNCR: During the next fifteen minutes the National Broadcasting Company and its affiliated independent stations make their facilities available for the presentation of CONSUMER TIME by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

6. CAST: This is the way we wash our clothes. .wash our clothes...wash our clothes. This is the way we wash our clothes...so early in the morning.

7. JOHN: How do American women wash their clothes?

8. FREYMAN: And are they doing it the most efficient way?...the quickest way?...the way that takes the least motions and is the least tiring?

9. MUSIC: BRIDGE

10. WOMAN: (TIRED) It's always good to have the washing finished.

11. FREYMAN: Washing is such a big job.

12. WOMAN: When the washing is done, I feel as if a heavy load is removed.

13. FREYMAN: I put off the washing whenever I can.

14. WOMAN: Wash day is one day I don't like.

15. FREYMAN: Washing upsets the whole house.

16. WOMAN: It's always good to have the washing finished.

17. MUSIC: CHORD

18. JOHN: Well...from those comments, Mrs. Freyman, I would say that the American homemaker isn't exactly enchanted with the prospect of wash day.

19. FREYMAN: That seems to be a pretty safe generalization, Johnny. Many women report that doing the family laundry is their most tiring job. So the Agricultural Experiment Station in Illinois decided to find out why. And they've come up with a very interesting study.

20. JOHN: What did they do...ask women about how they did their laundry... that kind of thing?

21. FREYMAN: That's exactly what they did...through questionnaires and interviews. They really made a thorough investigation. They studied the size of the family and the size of the wash...when the washing was done...where it was done.

22. JOHN: And how it was done.

23. FREYMAN: Mmmm hmmm...especially how it was done...whether the family had a washing machine...how near it was to the water supply. They found out where these homemakers dry their clothes in the winter and in the summmer. .if they soak the clothes...if they boil them.

24. JOHN: The whole story came out in the wash...to coin a phrase.

25. FREYMAN: Yes...all the facts on how this group of Illinois rural women washed their clothes...made quite a story. From these facts the home management specialists could help the homemakers save time and energy on wash day. For instance, Johnny, the home management specialists found out that the right room temperature has a lot to do with how tired you get from doing the laundry.

26. JOHNNY: Temperature? Well.. I guess that does make sense. .now that I think it over. Big factories have found that people work better if the temperature is right...so why shouldn't that be true for the homemaker and the family wash.

27. FREYMAN: Exactly. Industrial Research shows that workers get best results in rooms where the temperature is kept cool...with low humidity... and a constant movement of air.

28. JOHN: I bet there aren't many homemakers who have those conditions on wash day.

29. FREYMAN: Evidently not. But they'd be better off if they could try for that even temperature and air circulation. And the home management specialists confirmed what a lot of people already suspected...that the causes of laundry fatigue can be traced to lifting...carrying...stooping...stretching...standing and walking. They are all fatiguing, especially if they're prolonged.

30. JOHN: Well, if the laundry's got to be done at home...it's got to be done. So what's the answer? A washing machine?

31. FREYMAN: That helps, naturally. But it doesn't solve the whole problem. There are some things that homemakers in the city or on the farm can do though to cut down laundry fatigue...and that goes for whether they have or haven't a washing machine.

32. JOHN: I can think of one.. make the family wear the same clothes all week. But maybe that wouldn't be very practical.

33. FREYMAN: I think we can discount that suggestion. No, Johnny, the solution seems to be in the way you manage wash day...how you arrange your laundry equipment...how much space you have...and if your working surfaces are the right height for you.

34. JOHN: Now wait a minute. You can't tell me that there's a hard and fast rule for the perfect wash day. No set of rules is going to fit every different family wash.

35. FREYMAN: Of course not. But each homemaker can think about the way she does the family wash ..and keeping some of these points in mind... may help her do it easier and quicker ..without tiring her so much. Johnny...remember last spring, we did a program on dish washing.

36. JOHN: Yes...I remember.

37. FREYMAN: And do you remember how I made a list of every motion I made in stacking the dishes...carrying them to the sink . every motion right through the washing to putting them away?

38. JOHN: Sure...then you went over the list to see how many motions you could cut out...or combine. It really worked, didn't it, Mrs. Freyman...I mean, you really cut down your dish washing time.

39. FREYMAN: Of course I did. Now, the home management specialists suggest that women use that same kind of time and motion study on their laundry routine.

40. JOHN: The first step of which is to sit down and think about how you tackle the job.

41. FREYMAN: Or you ask another member of the family to follow you around during wash day and write down every single motion you make. Then you'll have an accurate record to study. And that's when you start to see the gremlins.

42. JOHN: Gremlins?

43. FREYMAN: Gremlins. These pesky little creatures plague all women who do their washing at home...whether the lady lives in a big city or on an isolated farm...whether she has a washing machine or a wash board. These are the gremlins that make wash day so unpopular.

44. JOHN: Well...isn't there anything we can do about these washday gremlins?

45. FREYMAN: There certainly is. We can face them squarely...look them right in the eye...and say .."gremlin...get thee hence...I'm going to do my washing the easiest, most efficient way...and with no trouble from you."

46. JOHN: Say...I'd like to meet some of these gremlins. Do I have to start taking in washing to do it?

47. FREYMAN: I'll introduce you to some right now, Johnny. First of all there's the gremlin who pokes the homemaker in the ribs so she doesn't stand erect while she's working.

48. GREMLIN: (ON FILTER ALL THE WAY THROUGH) (MALICIOUSLY) Naturally, I want women to stoop while they're doing the laundry...makes them more tired. .ruins their posture. Why...just in hanging up clothes.. I can make them waste one-third of their energy by bending down to get the clothes from the basket.

49. FREYMAN: That gremlin is right, Johnny. By having the clothes basket at a comfortable height.. at about your waist level...you can save one-third of the energy you'd use in stooping to pick up the clothes from a basket on the floor.

50. Well what if there isn't anything handy to put the clothes basket on?

51. FREYMAN: You make sure there is something handy. You can build up a coaster wagon, an old tea cart or a frame placed on the wheels of an old baby carriage for carrying the wet clothes.

52. JOHN: Sounds very simple.. and very practical.

53. FREYMAN: And those gremlins hate practicality. Just show them an ounce of it...the problem is solved...and they're banished forever.

54. JOHN: I've got another practical thought on the same subject. Why not put castors on benches...or boxes...or even backless chairs... and put your clothes basket on that? Then you can push it around, too.

55. FREYMAN: Why not indeed? That's a very good suggestion. The gremlins aren't going to like you.

56. GREMLINS: Yeah...how about buttin' out, bud. These gremlins are for women only. Let's have no washday heroes spoiling our fun. Not that you could really spoil mine...because I'll always be around.

57. JOHN: (SOTTO VOCE) Who is this pest, Mrs. Freyman?

58. GREMLIN: I hear you. I hear everything. And I'll tell you who I am. I'm the gremlin who makes women str...etch...and str....etch to hang laundry on the clothesline. They waste a lot of energy that way. Yes, they do.

59. FREYMAN: Hm...you're a pretty confident gremlin. What makes you think you'll always be around? You certainly won't if women have a tightly strung clothesline within easy reach. Six feet is the best height for most women. And the clothesline should be long enough to dry all the clothes at the same time.

60. JOHN: That's telling him, Mrs. Freyman. Incidentally...speaking of clotheslines This question came up in our house the other day. Whether a rope or wire clothesline is best.

61. FREYMAN: The home management specialists advise a stationary, rustproof wire. They suggest that you clean it occasionally with a cloth dipped in kerosene and then wipe it with a dry cloth

62. GREMLIN: Now that you've got the clothes hung up on the line, lady...why don't you sit down and rest. Let sleeping gremlins lie until next wash day.

63. FREYMAN: Oh no. That's what you gremlins like...when we women are indifferent and keep on doing the washing the same old way. What are you going to do, my fine gremlin, when more women wake up to the fact that they can do their washing easier...and start in to make it more efficient right from the sorting on?

64. GREMLIN: (IN PAIN) Oooooh!

65. FREYMAN: I thought so. You don't like the idea, do you. Well, listen to this. Women can cut down the washing time by properly sorting their soiled clothes.

66. JOHN: How about doing the sorting on a large high table...to save stooping.. like we were talking about a minute ago?

67. FREYMAN: A very fine suggestion...Johnny. And I hope our gremlin is still listening. It's a waste of time and energy to sort clothes on the floor. Besides having to stoop to pick them up...you may be getting them dirtier. You can make a very fine table for sorting clothes by laying plants or an old door across sawhorses, or old boxes.

68. JOHN: Is there any special time that the homemaker should sort the clothes for washing?

69. FREYMAN: For most women, the best time seems to be while the water is heating. It saves both time and steps if you do it then. That's when you should remove pins, too, turn pockets wrong side out... and shake or brush off loose dirt.

70. JOHN: Does soaking clothes do any good?

71. FREYMAN: Of course...it helps to remove food stains and dirt. And here's something that surprised me. The home management specialists say that you don't have to soak clothes in soapy water.

72. JOHN: You don't?

q 73. FREYMAN: No sir. Just soak them in clear, cool water. And short soaking seems to give better results than overnight soaking. They say about ten to fifteen minutes for white cottons, and about five to ten minutes for colored cotton clothes Another advantage is that you can soak one load of clothes while you're washing another.

74. JOHN: How about boiling white clothes? Anything new on that subject?

75. GREMLIN: No...nothing new. We gremlins advise women to keep right on boiling all white clothes. It takes more work than it's worth you know. But that's why the gremlins like it. Must keep things messed up, in a clean sort of way.

76. FREYMAN: That's the gremlin's answer, Johnny. But the home management specialists say you don't have to boil your white clothes if you wash them carefully. Of course, if there's illness in the family, it's very important to boil clothing, bedding, and handkerchiefs.

77. JOHN: Mrs. Freyman, do you have any idea how much soap is the right amount for washday? In my wife's bridge club...that's a constant argument.

78. FREYMAN: Well, the people who made the laundry study recommend a standing suds of two inches for an efficient wash. The homemaker may have to add some more soap sometimes in the middle of the wash to keep her suds up two inches.

79. JOHN: She could experiment ..and see how much soap she needs...and use that amount every time.

80. FREYMAN: That's right, you don't want to waste any precious soap. It's wasteful to use more than you need for a standing suds...hard to rinse out the clothes too.

81. GREMLIN: I don't mind how much soap you waste. Go ahead ..squander it. Leave the soap bar in wash water after you've gotten your suds. If you wear yourself out with a whole lot of unnecessary motions on wash day...maybe you'll be too tired to remember about a little thing like soap. I'll like that.

82. FREYMAN: I'd better get in some hints on saving soap, Johnny...just to counteract that gremlin's talk.

83. JOHN: You may fire when ready.

84. FREYMAN: Okay...unwrap bars of soap right after buying...and let them dry... makes them last longer. Use up your soap scraps. You can grind them in your meat chopper or cut them into small pieces and disolve them in water.

85. JOHN: Take that...gremlin.

86. FREYMAN: Here's something else the wash day gremlins don't like ..starch.

87. JOHN: Why not? It takes time to starch clothes...just another chore I should think.

88. FREYMAN: Ah...but starched cottons stay clean longer...and they're actually easier to wash because most of the dirt is in the starch, not the fabric. Of course starch cottons have more body and crispness, so they look better too.

89. JOHN: Yes...but in hot weather, starched clothes are also uncomfortable.

90. GREMLIN: Ah...hot weather...that's what I like. More clothes to wash. More people for me to bother. More hot basements...more tired backs because the ladies have to bend over...to pick up clothes. And they have to stretch to hang them up. Washing clothes in hot weather...that's just my dish.

91. FREYMAN: Johnny, we'd better have a concerted attack against these washday gremlins.

92. JOHN: Yes ma'am. Something's got to be done.

93. FREYMAN: Let's review for our CONSUMER TIME listeners the things they can do for a quicker...easier wash day...to banish those gremlins once and for all.

94. JOHN: Okay, Mrs. Freyman...suppose you start off...and I'll see if I can remember some of the points we've talked about.

95. FREYMAN: The traditional practice of washing once a week is still good. For small families, though, washing every two weeks may save time, energy, fuel, and water. But unless you have excellent laundry facilities, doing a small washing once a week is less tiring than doing a large washing every two weeks. So keep washings small!

96. MUSIC; CHORD

97. JOHN: Get rid of stretch and strain on wash day. Try a tightly stretched clothesline about six feet high. Make sure your sorting tables, tubs, and other equipment are the right height for you. Stand erect...you'll be less tired!

98. MUSIC: CHORD

99. FREYMAN: Soak cotton clothes in clear, cool water. A short soaking is better than leaving them in water overnight!

100. MUSIC: CHORD

101. JOHN: To boil or not to boil white clothes. Don't waste your energy on it, the experts say, unless there's illness in the family.

102. MUSIC: CHORD

103. FREYMAN: A good standing suds about two inches thick cleans clothes thoroughly. And keep the water sudsy all during the wash.

104. MUSIC: CHORD

105. JOHN: Rinse clothes only twice.

106. FREYMAN: Change rinse water frequently.

107. MUSIC: CHORD